

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An image generation system comprising:
 - a memory which stores a program and data for image generating; and
 - at least one processor which is connected to the memory and performs processing for image generating,
 - the processor performing:
 - depth cueing for an object on condition that the object is positioned within a depth cueing area such that the color of the object being more distant from a viewpoint is made closer to a target color, the depth cueing area being set near the backward clipping plane of the viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint;
 - varying an alpha (α) value of the object on condition that the object is positioned within the depth cueing area so that the object being more distant from the viewpoint becomes more transparent;
 - varying a depth cueing value for each vertex of the object based on a Z-value for each vertex of the object;
 - varying the alpha value for each vertex of the object based on the Z-value for each vertex of the object;
 - sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and
 - drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area.

2. (Previously Presented) The image generation system as defined in claim 1,
the processor further performing:
drawing a most distant background including a color different from the target
color.
- 3-9. (Canceled)
10. (Currently Amended) An image generation system comprising:
a memory which stores a program and data for image generating; and
at least one processor which is connected to the memory and performs
processing for image generating,
the processor performing:
varying an alpha (α) value of an object depending on the distance
between the object and the viewpoint on condition that the object is positioned within a depth
cueing area, the depth cueing area being set near the backward clipping plane of the viewing
volume based on a position of the viewpoint;
sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are
drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and
drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in
drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing
based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area.
11. (Currently Amended) A ~~computer usable program~~ computer readable medium
encoded with a computer program, ~~embodied on an information storage medium, the~~
computer program comprising a processing routine for implementing:
depth cueing for an object on condition that the object is positioned within a
depth cueing area such that the color of the object being more distant from a viewpoint is

made closer to a target color, the depth cueing area being set based on a position of the viewpoint;

varying an alpha (α) value of the object on condition that the object is positioned within the depth cueing area near the backward clipping plane of the viewing volume so that the object being more distant from the viewpoint becomes more transparent;

varying a depth cueing value for each vertex of the object based on a Z-value for each vertex of the object;

varying the alpha value for each vertex of the object based on the Z-value for each vertex of the object;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area.

12. (Previously Presented) The program as defined in claim 11, further comprising a processing routine for implementing:

drawing a most distant background including a color different from the target color.

13-19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium encoded with a computer program, ~~computer usable program embodied on an information storage medium, the computer program~~ comprising a processing routine for implementing:

varying an alpha (α) value of an object depending on the distance between the object and the viewpoint on condition that the object is positioned within a depth cueing area,

the depth cueing area being set near the backward clipping plane of the viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area.

21. (Currently Amended) An image generation method comprising:

depth cueing for an object on condition that the object is positioned within a depth cueing area such that the color of the object being more distant from a viewpoint is made closer to a target color, the depth cueing area being set near the backward clipping plane of the viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint;

varying an alpha (α) value of the object on condition that the object is positioned within the depth cueing area so that the object being more distant from the viewpoint becomes more transparent;

varying a depth cueing value for each vertex of the object based on a Z-value for each vertex of the object;

varying the alpha value for each vertex of the object based on the Z-value for each vertex of the object;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area.

22. (Original) The image generation method as defined in claim 21, further comprising:

drawing a most distant background including a color different from the target color.

23-26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) An image generation method comprising:

varying an alpha (α) value of an object depending on the distance between the object and the viewpoint on condition that the object is positioned within a depth cueing area, the depth cueing area being set near the backward clipping plane of the viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects is drawn sequentially from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area.

28. (Previously Presented) The image generation system as defined in claim 1, wherein the depth cueing value increases when the Z-value increases.

29. (Previously Presented) The image generation system as defined in claim 10, wherein the depth cueing value increases when the Z-value increases.

30. (Previously Presented) The program as defined in claim 11, wherein the depth cueing value increases when the Z-value increases.

31. (Previously Presented) The program as defined in claim 20, wherein the depth cueing value increases when the Z-value increases.

32. (Previously Presented) The image generation method as defined in claim 21, wherein the depth cueing value increases when the Z-value increases.

33. (Previously Presented) The image generation method as defined in claim 27,
wherein the depth cueing value increases when the Z-value increases.